

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.116

EXPEDITED PROCEDURE

EXAMINING GROUP 2664

PATENT

Application # 09/639,935

Attorney Docket # 1999-0514 (1014-165)

AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. - 15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) A method for identifying a flow, the method including:

receiving a request from a host for a flow identifier;

sending a flow identifier to the host;

receiving a packet with the flow identifier as the address, the packet having an Ethernet packet header and an Ethernet payload, the Ethernet header having an Ethernet source address and an Ethernet destination address, the Ethernet destination address being a first host address that is a virtual host address, the Ethernet payload having an Internet Protocol header and an Internet Protocol payload, and the Internet Protocol header having an Internet Protocol source address and an Internet Protocol destination address;

determining a second host address based upon the Internet Protocol destination address in the Internet Protocol header, the second host address being the address of a real host; and

storing the second host address correlated with the first host address in a packet forwarding table.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, further including:

changing the Ethernet source address of the packet to be equal to the first host address;

changing the Ethernet destination address of the packet to be equal to the second host address; and sending the packet.

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18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the Ethernet payload has an Internet Protocol header and an Internet Protocol payload, wherein the Internet Protocol header has an Internet Protocol source address and an Internet Protocol destination address, and further including:

- determining the second host address from the packet forwarding table;
- changing the Ethernet source address of the packet to the first host address;
- changing the Ethernet destination address of the packet to the second host address; and
- sending the packet.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, wherein an incoming packet that has the first host address as its destination address arrives at a port having a first port identifier, and wherein the packet forwarding table correlates the first host address with a second port identifier; and further including rejecting the packet if the first port identifier is not equal to the second port identifier.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, further including:

- determining a plurality of forwarding host addresses from the packet forwarding table;
- changing the Ethernet source address of the packet to the first host address;
- creating a copy of the packet for each forwarding host address;
- changing the Ethernet destination address of each copy of the packet to a forwarding host address; and
- sending each copy of the packet.

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21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein a forwarding host address is the address of a real host.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein a forwarding host address is a virtual host address.

23. - 27. (Canceled)

28. (Previously Presented) A method for handling flows, the method including:

adding a virtual circuit flag to a packet, the packet having an Ethernet header and an Ethernet payload, the Ethernet header having an Ethernet source address and an Ethernet destination address, the Ethernet destination address being a virtual host address;

setting the value of the virtual circuit flag to indicate when the packet belongs to a flow and requests that the flow be recognized by the network;

determining the virtual circuit flag indicates a flow, replacing the Ethernet destination address with a real host address based on the Ethernet source address and the virtual host address, and replacing the Ethernet source address with the virtual host address; and

sending the packet to the real host address.

29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

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receiving a packet with a virtual host destination address;
determining a next host destination address, if the packet is a first packet in a flow;
storing the virtual host destination address and the next host destination address as a correlated pair in a packet forwarding table, if the packet is the first packet in the flow; and
forwarding the packet to the next host destination address specified in the packet forwarding table for the virtual host destination address.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein determining a next host destination comprises:

determining the next host destination address based on a source host destination address in the packet.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein determining a next host destination comprises:

determining the next host destination address based on a source host destination address in the packet and the virtual host address.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30 wherein forwarding the packet to the next host destination address comprises:

moving the virtual host destination address from a destination address field to a source address field in the packet;

moving the next host destination address into the destination address field from the packet forwarding table; and

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sending the packet to the next host destination address.